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ABSTRACT

A survey of the status of language usage in Tunisia begins with an overview of patterns of usage of Arabic, the official language, and its many dialects and forms, and French, spoken as a second language by half the population. A recent, official movement toward Arabization in official and other formal communication is outlined and the popular reaction and success of the process are discussed. A matrix follows that rates Arabic and French on: (1) their usage rating using State Department classifications; (2) increase and decrease trends by the year 2000; (3) chief of state use in addressing the populace; (4) use in armed forces, government, court, and diplomatic communications, written and oral; (5) use as a language of instruction or required language in higher education, on the secondary and elementary levels, and in adult education; (6) use in the popular press, radio and television broadcasting, and film; (7) business and professional use, written and oral; (8) use in intellectual circles; (9) the alphabet situation; (10) their status in literature; (11) use in public signs and notices; and (12) the availability of instructional materials and dictionaries for use by English speakers. Explanatory notes give the number and population percentages using the languages, the type of alphabets used and specific instructional materials titles. A selected bibliography is also included. (MSE)

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COUNTRY STATUS REPORT:

TUNISIA

September, 1984

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Arabic, the official language of Tunisia, is spoken as a native language by virtually the entire population. Unlike Algeria and Morocco, where Berber-speaking communities constitute important ethnic minorities, no more than 1% of Tunisia's population is Berber, and the arabization of this group is virtually complete. What would appear to be a simple sociolinguistic situation, however, is confounded by the use of French, spoken as a second language by one-half of the population, and by the complex of different forms and dialects of Arabic currently spoken in Tunisia.

With independence from France in 1956, President Bourguiba launched a program of Arabization which later became known as Tunisification. French systems were adopted (for education, justice, and administration), with the addition of enough Arabic language to form a unique bilingual-bicultural synthesis. The end result has been, at the same time, educated Tunisians who feel more at ease speaking French than Arabic, and the evolution of several different forms of Arabic. Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is the official language of the mass media, the more formal political speeches, modern plays, novels, literary magazines, and is used partially in the schools, alongside French. Another form, known as intermediary or "educated" Arabic is a mixture of MSA and Tunisian colloquial, and is now the language of 90% of politics, is used increasingly by the mass media, in the administration, by intellectuals and even in literature. The hybrid Franco-Arabic is the most commonly-used language among students, government officials and professionals.

The arabization of written government proceedings and public issuances is nearly complete and students are aware that they cannot expect positions in the bureaucracy without proficiency in MSA. The use of French is still acceptable within the government, however, and a certain amount of prestige is still attached to its use. The same is true of the now completely Arabized military, where some officers have been educated in France and still tend to feel more at ease with French than with Arabic. Some form of Arabic is now being used in business, once solely the domain of French. Additionally, programming over the government-controlled radio and television (RTT) is 60% Arabic and 40% French; yet, of the locally-produced programs, 92% are in Arabic.

In the schools, Arabic is the language of instruction throughout the primary level and in some subjects in secondary school, while French and Arabic are taught as compulsory subjects at both levels. Higher education in Tunisia's only university--the University of Tunis--is entirely French-medium (with the exception of the Faculties of Theology and Arabic language and literature, where Arabic is the medium of instruction, and French taught as a foreign language), and the study of Arabic is compulsory at this level.

In sum, Tunisians have by and large welcomed Arabization with special status reserved for French. What sparked real Arabization in Tunisia after independence was the general perception that an elite had formed which was being distinguished by and privileged because of facility in the French language. This perception lives on, with important political implications, but added to the controversy over language is the issue of which form of Arabic will become the standard official form. Many feel that "educated Arabic" is the only sensible choice, should complete Arabization ever be achieved.

TUNISIA

Languages

Factoids

1. Usage rating*
2. Increase/decrease
3. Chief of State use?
4. Armed Forces/written
5. Armed Forces/oral
6. Government/written
7. Government/oral, national
8. Government/oral, local
9. Court/written
10. Court/oral
11. Diplomatic use?
12. Higher education
13. Higher ed: required?
14. Secondary education
15. Secondary: required?
16. Primary education
17. Primary: required?
18. Adult education
19. Popular press use
20. Transmission across borders?
21. Use in radio broadcasting
22. Use in TV broadcasting
23. Use in film
24. Business/professional/written
25. Business/professional/oral
26. Use in intellectual circles
27. Alphabet situation*
28. Status of literature
29. Use in signs?
30. Teaching materials*
31. Bilingual dictionaries*

	<u>Arabic</u> <u>French</u>																	
	1	3																
1. Usage rating*	1	3																
2. Increase/decrease	2	-																
3. Chief of State use?	1	0																
4. Armed Forces/written	1	0																
5. Armed Forces/oral	1	2																
6. Government/written	2	2																
7. Government/oral, national	1	0																
8. Government/oral, local	1	0																
9. Court/written	1	0																
10. Court/oral	1	0																
11. Diplomatic use?	1	1																
12. Higher education	1	1																
13. Higher ed: required?	1	1																
14. Secondary education	1	1																
15. Secondary: required?	1	1																
16. Primary education	1	0																
17. Primary: required?	1	1																
18. Adult education	1	0																
19. Popular press use	1	1																
20. Transmission across borders?	1	1																
21. Use in radio broadcasting	1	1																
22. Use in TV broadcasting	2	2																
23. Use in film	1	1																
24. Business/professional/written	2	2																
25. Business/professional/oral	1	2																
26. Use in intellectual circles	1	1																
27. Alphabet situation*	1	1																
28. Status of literature	1	2																
29. Use in signs?	1	1																
30. Teaching materials*	2	2																
31. Bilingual dictionaries*	2	2																

Notes:

Numbers are explained on following pages

? = information unavailable within time frame of project

- = not applicable

* = footnotes on following pages

1. 1984 ESTIMATES. NUMBER OF NATIVE SPEAKERS

<u>Language</u>	<u>Number of Native Speakers</u>	<u>Percentage of Population</u>
Arabic	6,930,000	99%
French	-	-

27. TYPE OF ALPHABET USED

<u>Language</u>	<u>Alphabet</u>
Arabic	Arabic
French	Roman

30. TEACHING MATERIALS FOR ENGLISH SPEAKERS

<u>Language</u>	<u>Texts</u>
Arabic (Modern Standard)	Abboud, Peter F. et al. <u>Elementary Modern Standard Arabic</u> , Parts I and II. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, Department of Near Eastern and North African Studies, 1975-76.
	. <u>Modern Standard Arabic, Intermediate Level: Parts I-III</u> . Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, Department of Near Eastern and North African Studies, 1972.
	Azmi, Sanaa and Belkacem Baccouche. <u>Conversations in Modern Standard Arabic</u> . New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984.
Arabic (Tunisian)	Ben Abdelkader, Rached and Aziza Naovar. <u>Peace Corps/ Tunisia Course in Tunisian Arabic</u> . Washington, DC: Peace Corps/ACTION, 1979.
	Inglefield, Patrick L. Kacem Ben-Hamza and Toufik Abida. <u>Tunisian Arabic Basic Course</u> . Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, Research Center for the Language Sciences, 1970.
	Stephenson, Edward. <u>Tunisian Arabic</u> . Providence, RI: Brown University, Peace Corps Training Program, 1967.
	Scholes, Robert J. and Toufik Abida. <u>Spoken Tunisian Arabic</u> . Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, Intensive Language Training Center, 1966.

31. DICTIONARIES FOR THE ENGLISH SPEAKER

<u>Language</u>	<u>Texts</u>
Arabic (Modern Standard)	al-Ba'albaki, Munir. <u>Al-Mawrid. A Modern English-Arabic Dictionary</u>, 16th ed. Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-'ilm lil Mabayin, 1982. Doniach, Nadkimon S. (ed). <u>The Oxford English-Arabic Dictionary of Current Usage</u>. Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1978. Wehr, Hans. <u>Arabic-English Dictionary</u>. Translated and edited by J. Milton Cowan. Ithaca, NY: Spoken Language Services, 1977. al-Karmi, Hasan S. <u>Al-Manar, English-Arabic Dictionary</u>. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1972.
Arabic (Tunisian)	Ben Abdelkader, Rached et al. <u>Peace Corps English-Tunisian Arabic Dictionary</u>. Washington, DC: Peace Corps/ACTION, 1977.

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Khlifi, Omar. Histoire du Cinema en Tunisie. Tunis(?): Societe Tunisienne de Diffusion, 1970.

Maamori, Mohamed. "The Linguistic Situation in Independent Tunisia," American Journal of Arabic Studies, 1:50-65, 1973.

Massialas, Byron G. and Samir Ahmed Jarrar. Education in The Arab World. New York, NY: Praeger Publishers, 1983.

Memmi, Albert (ed). Anthologie des Ecrivains Maghrebins d'Expression Francaise. Paris: Presence Africaine, 1964.

Micaud, Charles A. "Bilingualism in North Africa: Cultural and Sociopolitical Implications," Western Political Quarterly, 27:1:92-103, 1974.

Nelson, Harold D (ed). Tunisia; A Country Study. Washington, DC: The American University, 1979.

Nolan, Riall W. "Tunisia's Time of Transition," Current History, 80:470:405-9, 435, 1981.

Skik, Hichem. "l'Enseignement en Tunisie, Le Contenu de l'Enseignement," Maghreb-Machrek, No. 78, pp. 63-60, 1977.

Stevens, Paul. "French-Arabic Bilingualism in North Africa," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Georgetown University, 1974.

Explanation of Matrix Figures - a

1. Usage rating, using the State Department classifications
 - 1: Official language, most widely used.
 - 2: Official language, not most widely used.
 - 3: Widely used language, but not official. (Over 10% of population)
 - 4: Unofficial language used by significant minority (but less than 3)
 - 5: Unofficial language used by influential minorityFOOTNOTE: NUMBERS OF SPEAKERS, PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION
2. Increase/decrease trends by the year 2000
 - 1: Number of native speakers will increase in proportion
 - 2: Number of native speakers will remain proportionally constant
 - 3: Number of native speakers will decrease in proportion
3. Chief of State use, in addressing populace: YES (1) NO (0)
4. Armed Forces written communications
 - 1: Only language used in official communiques
 - 2: One of the languages used in official communiques
 - 0: Not used in official communiques
5. Armed Forces oral communications
 - 1: Used on all levels
 - 2: Used among officers only
 - 3: Used among multi-lingual NCO's and troops
 - 4: Used among monolingual troops only
 - 0: Not used
6. Written government communications
 - 1: Only language used in official communications
 - 2: One of the languages used in official communications
 - 0: Not used in official communications
7. Oral government communications/national level
 - 1: Official language spoken in national assembly
 - 2: One of the official languages spoken in national assembly
 - 0: Not used in government
8. Oral government communications/local level
 - 1: Official language in local government
 - 2: One of the official languages used in local government
 - 3: Allowed in local government proceedings, translated into official language
 - 0: Not used in local government
9. Court use in written communications
 - 1: Only language used in official communications
 - 2: One of the languages used in official communications
 - 0: Not used

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Explanation of Matrix Figures - b

10. Court use in oral communications
 - 1: Only official language used in court
 - 2: One of the official languages used in court
 - 3: Allowed in courts, translated into official language(s)
 - 0: Not used in courts
11. Diplomatic use in notes to other countries: YES (1) NO (0)
12. Use in higher education
 - 1: Official medium of instruction
 - 2: Unofficial medium of instruction
 - 0: Not used
13. Language taught as subject in required courses in higher education:
YES (1) NO (0)
14. Use in secondary education
 - 1: Official medium of instruction
 - 2: Unofficial medium of instruction
 - 0: Not used as medium of instruction
15. Language taught as subject in required courses on secondary level?
YES (1) NO (0)
16. Use in primary education
 - 1: Official medium of instruction
 - 2: Unofficial medium of instruction
 - 0: Not used as medium of instruction
17. Language taught as subject in required courses on primary level?
YES (1) NO (0)
18. Language use in adult education
 - 1: Used in oral and written technical instruction
 - 2: Used in oral and written life skills instruction
 - 3: Used in oral life skills instruction
 - 4: Used in literacy classes only
 - 0: Not used in adult informal education
19. Language use in popular press
 - 1: Used in publications throughout country
 - 2: Used in centrally-based publications with national distribution
 - 3: Used only in regional and local publications
 - 4: Used in clandestine publications only
 - 0: Not used

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Explanation of Matrix Figures - c

20. Language used in radio/TV transmission across national borders?
YES (1) NO (0)
21. Language use in radio broadcasting
1: Language used broadcasting throughout country
2: Language used in centrally-based national broadcasts
3: Language used in local broadcasting only
3: Language used in clandestine broadcasting only
0: Language not used in radio broadcasting
22. Language use in TV broadcasting
1: Language used in telecasting throughout country
2: Language used in centrally-based national telecasting
3: Language used regional and local telecasting only
0: Language not used in TV
23. Language use in film
1: Language used in indigenous film-making
2: Foreign-language films dubbed/subtitled into language
0: Language not used in films
24. Business/Professional use - written
1: Sole official language in business and professional communications
2: One of the official languages in business and professional communication
0: Not used
25. Business/Professional use - oral
1: Used in trade and commerce throughout country
2: Used in national trade and commerce only
3: Used only in local trade and commerce
26. Language use in intellectual circles
1: Language used in indigenous scholarly publications
2: Language used in formal scholarly discussion
0: Language not used
27. Alphabet situation
1: Established standardized alphabet exists.
2: Alphabet developed, no standardization
3: Competing alphabets exist
0: No alphabet exists
FOOTNOTE: TYPE OF ALPHABET USED
28. Status of indigenous literature
1: Established written tradition exists
2: Literature tradition emerging
3: Popular literature exists
0: No written literature exists
29. Language used in official public signs, notices: YES (1) NO (0)

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Explanation of Matrix Figures - d

30. Teaching materials for English speakers
1: Wide range of teaching materials exists
2: Narrow range of teaching materials exists
0: No teaching materials exist
FOOTNOTE: SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY
31. Dictionaries for English speakers
1: Wide range of bilingual dictionaries exists
2: Narrow range of dictionaries exists
0: No dictionaries exist
FOOTNOTE: SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY